

Duxbury's early settlers: John Washburn

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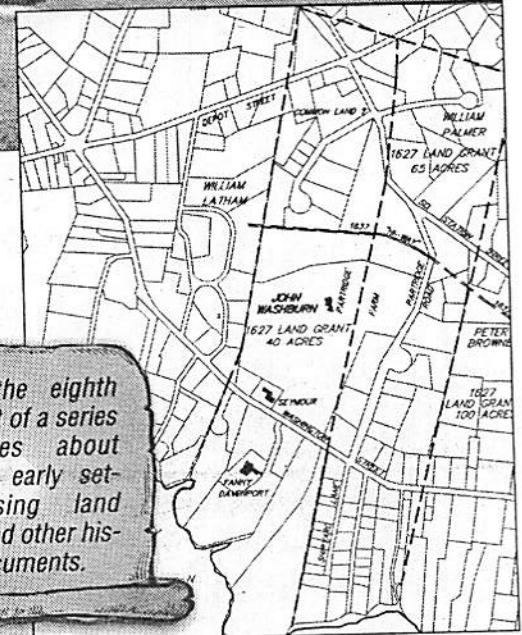
John Washburn, a tailor, arrived in Plymouth in 1632. He was taxed in 1633, but not in 1634. In January of 1635, he purchased a house and land from Edward Bumpas. From this chain of events we can surmise that John returned to England in late 1633 and made arrangements for passage for his family and returned to Plymouth in late 1634. His wife, Margery, arrived in Plymouth with her two sons, John, Jr. and Philip in the spring of 1635. John Washburn did not appear on the list of colonists in 1627, and one wonders how he would qualify to share in the 1627 Plymouth Land Division, in which each family received 20 acres for every man, woman and child. There are some inferences that he may have traded the land he purchased from Bumpas for a lot more to his liking. In any event, on April 5, 1641 it was ordered that "John Washburn might have forty acres in Duxburrow, if it be there to be had." John Washburn, Sr. died soon after May of 1670.



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Pictured is the dwelling of the Rev. Ralph Partridge, George Partridge (Ralph's brother or cousin) and the Honorable George Partridge (George's great grandson) Currently owned by Stephen and Lisa Fitzgibbons.



This is the eighth installment of a series of articles about Duxbury's early settlers, using land records and other historical documents.

In 1642 and again in 1643 a committee was appointed to "set the ancient bounds betwixt the lands of Mr. Thomas Besbeeck and John Washburn." John Washburn had purchased 20 acres of land and buildings from William Latham and he had also purchased land from Edward Bumpas that had once been granted to William Palmer, "which lote he (Palmer) gave up to ye company." Latham sold 20 acres of land and house to the Rev. Ralph Partridge on Dec. 26, 1639. Identifying which parcel goes where is difficult at best. What we do know is, John Washburn left his homestead farm to his son Philip in 1666. Philip deeded the 40 acres with a house and orchard to Thomas Lasall in 1684 and Mr. Lasall deeded the property to John Partridge, George Partridge's son within two months. John Washburn and his son John, Jr. were among the 54 proprietors of Bridgewater in 1645. Although John and John, Jr. owned property in Bridgewater

it's quite possible only John, Jr. moved there right away. John, Sr. shows up in Duxbury records in 1658 but he died in 1670 in Bridgewater. By 1685 with the deed to John Partridge the entire Partridge Farm was either in the hands of George Partridge's family or the heirs of the Rev. Ralph Partridge, specifically Ralph Thacher.

The Rev. Ralph Partridge, a respected and honorable man, sometimes used property and later purchased it. I found an instance where two owners did exactly that. William Bassett and Francis Sprague deeded to Mr. Partridge "land now enclosed by the said Mr. Partridge." That land seems to be closer to what is now Hall's corner.

By 1658, at the time of his death, Mr. Partridge had accumulated some land in

Palmer's Grant, and Latham's Grant, and it was now referred to as Partridge Farm. Although greatly reduced in area, a magnificent house still stands where the Partridges and their relatives lived for a long time. The property is currently owned by Stephen and Lisa Fitzgibbons.

The Rev. Ralph Partridge was the much revered first minister of Duxbury's First Parish Church. He served the town well for over 20 years and compared to some who followed, he could be described as the best of the best. In addition to his

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preaching and church activities, he was often called upon to tutor the young men in town in the hope they would move on to Harvard.

Rev. Partridge died in

1658, lamented by friends, family, parish and colony leaders. There were many tributes showing the respect he commanded throughout New England. He was buried in the graveyard by the first meeting house. Although there is no

headstone, there is a cobblestoned area about the size of a grave. It was uncovered in the late 1800s and is probably the final resting place of Duxbury's first minister.

Read the second part of this story in a future Clipper.